# *LEESBURG BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW*
# *STAFF REPORT*

**REGULAR MEETING: 19 NOVEMBER 2012**
**AGENDA ITEM 4b**

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*** This report has been changed slightly from the last review based on meetings with other Town staff to reflect the major issues to be addressed, which have been highlighted.**

**BAR Case No. TLZM-2012-0005:** New construction of a service station, convenience store and car wash in a planned development.

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| Reviewer: | Kim K. Del Rance, LEED AP |
| Address: | **Land Bay C, Trimble Plaza and Miller Drive** |
| Zoning: | PEC, H-2 Overlay District |
| Referral Request: | Irish Grandfield, Environmental Planner |
| Owner Representative: | Christine Gleckner, AICP, Walsh, Colucci, Lubely, Emrich & Walsh PC |

**APPLICABLE GUIDELINES: H-2 CORRIDOR BY PROFFER**
**BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES**
*p.12 Design Expression*
*For new commercial centers or residential developments incorporating multiple buildings, each individual building or structure should be compatible with other buildings within the overall design plan. Even if developed over time, there should be a master design plan that relates buildings to each other and to the total development.*

- This service station has been preceded by approvals for residential design (TLHP-2006-0020) and commercial designs (TLHP-2007-0009 Exxon and TLHP-2006-0112 Winwood Daycare) most of which have gabled roofs on brick structures with cornice detailing and substantial materials which were approved as being in character with historic Leesburg.
- This convenience store and car wash design shows an excessive amount of an insubstantial material, EIFS, with concrete block and brick- three textured materials and a flat roof with an exaggerated front parapet for signage. Each of these individually would be a candidate for change to be appropriate, but taken together the combination is not in accordance with the guidelines stated above.

Examples of buildings approved in Oaklawn to date:

Winwood Children's Daycare Center

Northwest Federal Credit Union


Pulte Homes at Oaklawn

*P.14 Siting / Relationship to Roadway*
*A publicly oriented building, such as an office or commercial facility, should have as its primary orientation the major roadway from which it is accessible. This orientation should be expressed not only in the building's predominant architectural expression but also through the presence of a clearly recognizable entrance. When the approach to such a building is from a different direction than that of the roadway, the* ***building should have an entrance which is oriented to the direction of approach****, while maintaining a consistent architectural identity that is also recognizable from the adjacent roadway.*

- The entrance from the main roadway (Miller Drive) is to an entrance from a private road on the west and east to the main convenience store building. The building is sited facing Miller Drive but is obscured by the canopy and gas pumps. Rotating the building to face the intersection and driveway entrance and away from the gas pumps is appropriate.

***The side or rear façade of a building located adjacent to and visible from a roadway should be designed with as much attention as the primary façade, even if the roadway is not the building's primary orientation or point of entry****. Windows, doors, balconies and varied rooflines all help to add visual interest. When the buildings must present blank side or walls to the roadway, these must be screened from view with appropriate plant materials, berms or other screening.*

- If you approach from the south and split to go one way or another around the building to enter the parking lot you are facing essentially the rear of the building, the car wash entrance and the dumpster enclosure. The back of the convenience store building is what all entering from the south will see, which should be altered to fit the approaches. The sides of the convenience store are also blank and have no human scale detailing or screening. The car wash entrance is prominent as those entering to the west side will drive towards it as they pass on the west side to find the site entrance.
- The siting of the car wash demands it has more of a presence or be screened appropriately.

*P.16 Features that* ***Promote*** *Human Scale Buildings (to be encouraged– 3 of the 7 listed apply):*

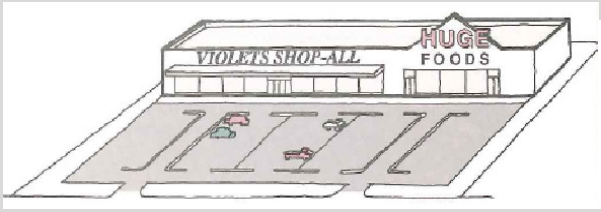
1. *Balconies, columns, covered walkways or other façade projections or recesses*
   The hanging canopy over the entrance is appropriate and encouraged.
2. *Walls with doors and windows, differentiated wall surfaces and other building details*
   *The front façade wall treatment with various windows and changing materials from brick to what appears to be split faced concrete block is encouraged.*

3. *Textured and/or modular building materials (brick, clapboards)*
   *The brick and split-faced block used in harmony is appropriate and encouraged*

*P.16 Features that **Obscure or Destroy** human scale (to be avoided – 3 of the 7 listed apply):*

1. *Blank walls*
   The blank walls should be detailed to a human scale or screened.
2. *Smooth or panelized building materials (stucco, metal or prefabricated concrete panels)*
   The smooth stucco on the rear and side should be detailed to a human scale or have the materials altered.
3. *Flat (not visible) roofs*
   The roofs should be compatible with the existing approved roofs in this development, all of which are gabled with shingles.

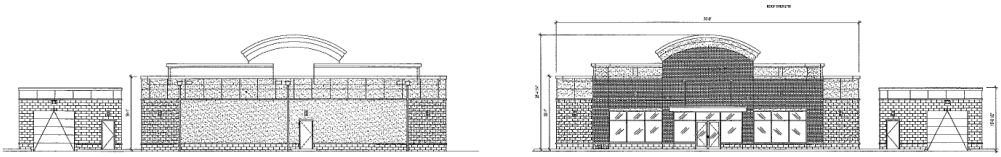
*P.18 Massing and Roof form*
*Projects containing many buildings or accommodating a variety of different functions generally should provide variety in building size and massing. A transition from small or low buildings on street frontages to larger and taller structures on the interior of the properties is generally encouraged.*
*An obtrusive expanse of parking occurs when a single large building mass is located at the rear of the site (below, left). Variety in building massing and siting promotes visual interest and reduces the visual impact of parking (below, right).*



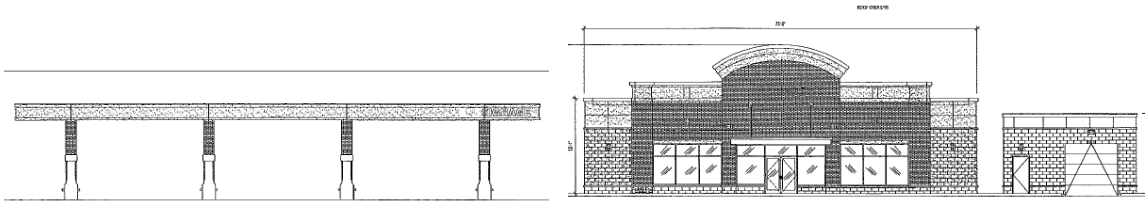

**Obtrusive parking**

**parking impact reduced**

*Elements such as roofs or canopies **should not appear to be pasted on**, but should be*
*Three dimensional structural building elements such as … parapet walls…and roofs should be integral parts of the building design and built of materials similar to or compatible with the rest of the structure.*



Façade ppears to be pasted on front and can be seen easily from rear as not being functional



As can be seen by drawings of façade and gas pump canopies above, the façade will rise above the height of the canopies which will block its visibility and change the scale of the building in relation to the canopies which are already being requested to be higher than is normally allowed due to the slope of the site.

*P.21 Materials and Detailing*

The materials used in the construction of a building design can have significant implications for its appearance. Since the solid, exterior wall surface, for example, often accounts for up to 80% of a building's façade area, the selection of an appropriate wall material may be the single most important material choice. Yet, too often materials are selected that have no relationship either to those found in the Leesburg area or with other materials chosen for the building itself. The following guidelines provide assistance in the selection, application and detailing of appropriate building materials:

- Artificial veneer materials such as styrofoam-based simulated stucco, cast or fiberglass stone or brick and plastic appear insubstantial and unauthentic, and should be avoided on new buildings.
- Traditional roofing- materials that are also appropriate for new construction include slate, wood shakes, and standing seam metal such as copper, tin or aluminum.
- The history and nature of Leesburg indicate that wood, red brick and native stone are prevalent building materials; these materials likewise are appropriate for newer construction throughout town. Stucco+ and concrete masonry occur less frequently, but may be acceptable building materials in some instances, depending on a building's style and function.
- The specific materials used on a building or set of related buildings should **be compatible with each other** in terms of size, shape and texture. While variety in the size or shape of different building components may add interest to a building's exterior appearance, **more than one highly textured material such as stone, ashlar-faced concrete block or wood shingled roofs should not be used on a single building. Instead, such materials should be combined with those that are simpler and less textured to avoid a confusing or overly elaborate appearance**.
- While the selection of materials for new construction should be influenced by those materials that are familiar in the built environment of Leesburg, the architectural detailing of such materials-the way in which they are used in relation to other materials in the building-may be less traditional as long as it relates to the overall design of the building.

The use of brick, split-faced concrete block and stucco or EIFS (which is used is unclear) all on this small building is too elaborate and the variety should be reduced to two or fewer of these materials.
While this is only a second submission review and colors are not mentioned, P. 23 should be referred to by the applicant and designers before submitting an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

*P. 25 Signage*
*…The Board of Architectural Review will review sign requests to determine appropriate color, design and location within the H-2 corridor.*
The location is the only of these items being reviewed. The current location in the northwest corner of the site angled to face the intersection of the public and private roads is appropriate.

*P. 28 Screening*
*Preferred methods of screening building utilities and equipment include berming and/ or vegetative planting, or walls and fences. Plant materials selected for screening should provide a hardy, dense screen throughout the year. Walls and fences should be located in close proximity to and made of materials compatible with those of the adjacent building(s), and should be both solid and opaque. The Design of walls in particular should be integrated with that of the building structure. If they are not of the same materials the building they should be the same color.*
The dumpster enclosure details are not given and it is not shown in the elevations so no review can be made of it at this review, but this will be required for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

*P.32 Site Access*
*Providing clear and convenient access to a development site for both motorists and pedestrians is often an early concern in the development process. Yet, when a number of parcels along a roadway frontage*

*of limited length each take an independent approach to providing site access, complicated or confusing traffic patterns can result and create potential safety hazards. Numerous or excessively wide entrances also can reduce roadside opportunities for berming or the retention of vegetation that enhance the natural character of the area or may provide visual screening. The following guidelines offer suggestions for minimizing the impact of providing convenient site access:*
*Direct access from the roadway to development sites adjacent to the roadway is discouraged. Access should be provided by secondary roads, streets or common driveways wherever possible.*

- The current main entrance follows this guideline

*When site access must be provided directly from the main roadway, especially where existing banks or berms provide edge definition or visual screening along the roadway, the access point should be located where only minimal disturbance of existing topography is necessary.*
*To minimize traffic conflicts,* ***vehicular entrances and exits to a site should be consolidated at a single location*** *a sufficient distance away from street intersections with high traffic volume.*

- The main entrance follows this, but the two additional entrances on the east side of the site should be minimized.

*The apparent* ***width of entrances and driveways should be minimized*** *wherever possible by the provision of a* ***planted median strip of at least 6' in width between incoming and outgoing traffic*** *particularly if two or more lanes are provided in each direction.*

- All three entrances are wide and currently there is no planted median, only stripes which do not protect the pedestrians from oncoming traffic in either direction.

*Entrances and driveways should permit* ***safe and convenient pedestrian crossing*** *where they intersect sidewalks and other pedestrian circulation systems.*

- The current pedestrian access from across Trimble Plaza is awkward, long and wraps around the rear of the building requiring pedestrians to cross in front of the car wash entrance driveway as traffic leaves the roadway.

*Pedestrian access to sites should be provided from* ***all adjacent public sidewalks****, protected from vehicular traffic by grade separation, plant materials and/or berming.*

- Currently there are two one pedestrian accesses which have none of the above conditions.

*Where appropriate, effort should be made to provide secondary pedestrian access to sites and linkages between adjacent sites by the provision of pedestrian paths not necessarily associated with public roadways.*

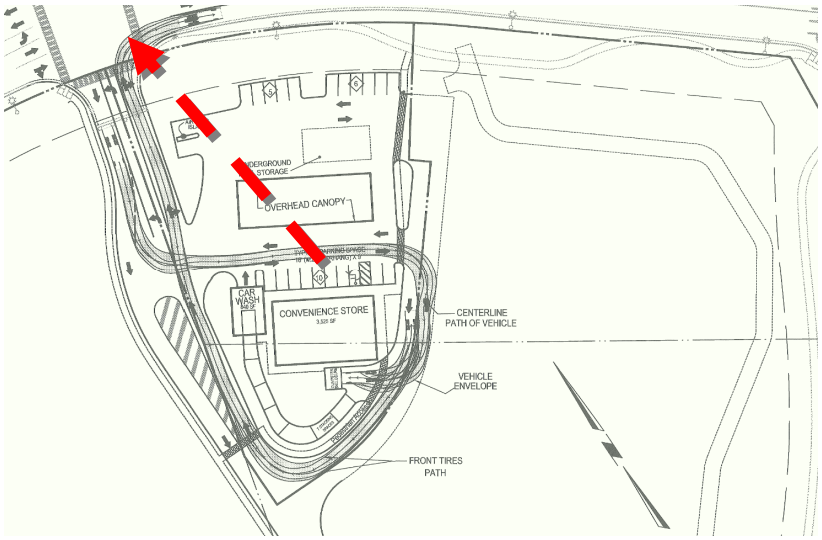
- This site is a candidate for having additional pedestrian access since it is completely surrounded by roadways.

*P.33 Parking Lots*
*… it is the provision of on-site parking that most distinguishes the character of new and recent development*
*A single large expanse of parking should be avoided. Instead, parking should be provided in smaller, well-defined areas, separated and screened by features such as berms, access drives, landscaping and/or buildings. Parking areas* ***should not*** *be located exclusively at the front of building sites.*

- Parking for this site is exclusively at the front of the site, which **is not to be done**.

*Wherever possible, some of the required parking should be provided at the sides or rear of the site, following the traditional pattern of downtown Leesburg. Promoting variety in the placement of buildings on the site (see Size and Scale, Chapter I/Building Design Standards) may also help achieve spatial variety in the placement of parking areas.*

- This site should have alternative parking placement using the rear and/or sides of the building for smaller parking areas.




**STAFF SUMMARY**

This report covers more than the minimum requirements for a rezoning referral so below it is broken into the main areas needed to review a referral. They are **Size, scale, massing, height and siting**.

The **size** of the buildings is appropriate in general, but the relation of the size of one to another is affected by scale, roof and façade treatments, so it cannot be considered alone.

The **scale** of the buildings and canopies are awkward due to the height of the false façade parapet being higher than the canopies over the gas pumps. Since the reason for the rezoning includes raising the height of the canopies above what is allowed, the height of the front façade should not be raised even higher as it is a one story building. Visibility of the rear of the parapet from behind the building makes it obvious it is only decorative, not functional and "pasted on" which is not traditional to Leesburg.

The **massing** of the buildings is not inappropriate, but the relationship between the buildings can be more appropriate with regards to the overall site and access issues.

The **height** of the convenience store front façade parapet wall is awkward, not functional and appears to be pasted on, which is not typical of Leesburg.

The **siting** on this parcel has the main building placed at the rear of the lot facing the major roadway (Miller Drive) and the parking lot is in front of it, these two things are in the guidelines, on p.18 and on p.33 it states *Parking areas **should not** be located exclusively at the front of building sites.*
In addition to the positioning of the building on the site is the fact that the rear and sides of the building have not been treated as importantly as the front, which is required when a building faces more than one roadway. Pedestrian access and driveway entrances are also part of the siting and do not fit within the guidelines as stated above.

**Overall**, staff finds that this proposal does not meet the H-2 Corridor Design Guidelines without re-siting the main building and adjusting parking. There may be alternative building and parking placements that would better follow the guidelines and should be explored before rezoning this parcel.
Other items such as size, scale, massing and height can be adjusted later, but siting should be addressed at this stage.